



FACT SHEET



VERIFICATION AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION TREATY

The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) is critical to the international community's broader efforts to preserve and promote peace and security by preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. The NPT incorporates an important understanding: parties to the Treaty should be able to obtain the benefits that peaceful nuclear energy and research can bring to mankind, but they may do so only if they comply with the provisions of the Treaty designed to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Every state party to the NPT is obligated to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

- Nuclear weapon states (NWS) must not in any way assist, encourage or induce any non-nuclear weapon state (NNWS) to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (Article I).
- NNWS undertake corollary responsibilities not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices, or to seek or receive assistance in their manufacture (Article II). They also agree to accept safeguards administered by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to verify that they are not diverting nuclear energy from peaceful uses to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (Article III).
- All states party are obligated not to provide the materials most useful for nuclear weapons purposes – source or special fissionable material and equipment or

material especially designed or prepared to process, use or produce special fissionable material – to non-nuclear weapon states unless the nuclear materials are subject to IAEA safeguards (Article III). The United States strongly supports including as part of the safeguards standard adherence to the Additional Protocol, which provides the IAEA with greater information and expands the scope of its activities and authorities.

- Countries' "inalienable right . . . to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes" is conditioned on conformity with the above obligations, as is nuclear cooperation between and among states party (Article IV). States should withhold assistance if they believe that a specific form of cooperation would encourage or facilitate proliferation, or if they believe that the recipient is in violation of Articles I or II (*e.g.*, by assisting a NNWS's efforts to acquire nuclear weapons or, in the case of a NNWS, by pursuing a nuclear weapons program), or is not in full compliance with its safeguards obligations.

Verification of Compliance

Verification of compliance with a party's NPT obligations is both a national and an international responsibility. National means and methods (NMM) of verification – including diplomatic, open source and technical means and methods –

and international means and methods must be brought to bear in this critical task.

States Party, acting individually and collectively, are responsible for assessing noncompliance with the obligations outlined in Articles I, II, III and IV. They should bring noncompliance that threatens international peace and security to the attention of the UN Security Council for action.

The IAEA's responsibilities are more limited but no less important. The IAEA is charged with helping verify that NNWS do not divert nuclear materials and facilities acquired for peaceful purposes to nuclear weapons or unknown purposes, as well as ensuring that states comply with their safeguards agreements. Pursuant to its Statute, the IAEA Board of Governors must report noncompliance with safeguards agreements to all IAEA members and to the UN Security Council and General Assembly.

Dangers of Noncompliance

International and regional security is seriously jeopardized if violations of the NPT are not dealt with promptly and effectively. While Libya's welcome example in renouncing its former pursuit of weapons of mass destruction points to the benefits of compliance, the North Korean and Iranian nuclear weapons programs and illicit nuclear procurement networks continue to threaten international peace and security.

The international community must pursue effective measures to reverse existing cases of noncompliance and to prevent new ones. Failure to require all states strictly to comply with the NPT's nonproliferation obligations and to hold violators accountable for their noncompliance will not only embolden current violators but also tempt others. The result will be less security for all, and a greater risk not only of nuclear proliferation by states but also of nuclear terrorism. Taking prompt and effective collective action to bring violators into compliance will help ensure that future generations live in a world in which the nonproliferation goals and objectives of the NPT are realized, the threat of nuclear proliferation is contained, and the benefits of nuclear energy can be more fully enjoyed.

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